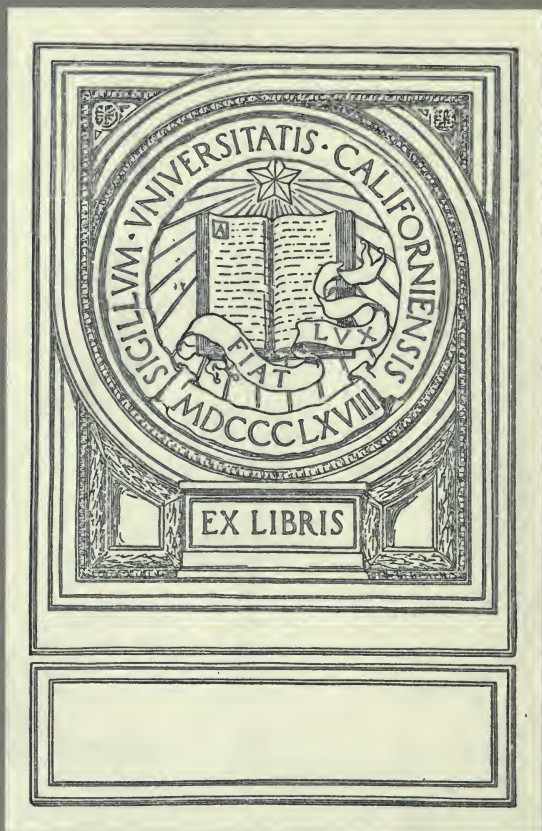


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## RECOMMENDATIONS

OF

# Worcester's Dictionaries;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A REVIEW OF

WEBSTER'S SYSTEM OF ORTHOGRAPHY,

FROM THE

UNITED STATES DEMOCRATIC REVIEW,

FOR MARCH, 1856.

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BOSTON:

HICKLING, SWAN AND BROWN.

1856.

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The *New York Evening Post*, in speaking of this Review, says, —

“ We do not remember to have seen elsewhere such full justice done to Noah Webster’s System of Orthography, under which the English language has been corrupting for the last quarter of a century, as in an article which we find in the last number of the *Democratic Review*. We have copied it at length in our columns, and would gladly contribute toward the expense of having it read twice a year in every school house in the United States, until every trace of Websterian spelling disappears from the land. It is a melancholy evidence of the amount of mischief one man of learning can do to society, that Webster’s System of Orthography is adopted and propagated by the largest publishing house ; through the columns of the most widely circulated monthly magazine, and through one of the ablest and most widely circulated newspapers in the United States.

“ The article is attributed to the pen of Edward S. Gould, of this city.”

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*An American Dictionary of the English Language.* By  
 NOAH WEBSTER. 1828-1853.

SOME five and twenty years have elapsed since this dictionary was first issued; and, to its compiler and publishers, they have been years of success. The time for producing the work was fortunate. Our language had grown rapidly for a considerable period; its vocabulary was largely increased by the contributions of science, by numerous adoptions from foreign tongues, and by an accumulation of derivatives from our own established words; so that a well-digested record of the progress of the language was really needed. Besides, the parties in interest, following the suggestion of the title page, had industriously cultivated an *Esprit-Americain* in behalf of the book, which materially aided its favorable reception.

If Webster had confined himself to recording such additions of words as usage had sanctioned, to a careful sifting of etymologies, and to his own valuable definitions, his work would have been as great an acquisition to literature as to his individual profit. But, unfortunately, like many other men, priding himself most on what he was least fitted for, and assuming a character for which few men *are* fitted,—that of a reformer,—he added to his legitimate labor the gratuitous task of improving the orthography of the language.

True, language, like all things human, is mutable. So long as it continues to be spoken, it will continue to change. From the days of JOHN-SON to the days of Webster, thousands of words had been added to the common stock, and many variations had taken place in the meanings of words. Spelling, also, had undergone some modifications. For example,

the *k* of *musick*, *physick*, etc., and the *u* of *favour*, *honour*, etc., had been gradually dropped by good writers, though probably without good reason; and thus orthography, too, was in a state of progress. This was an undesirable state; for it left the student without any absolute standard. And if the student chose to refine upon the matter, he would soon see that not only was there no absolute standard, but that the very principles of our orthography — its rules and its analogies — were exceedingly defective.

This is all true; but it is also true that discovering defects is one thing, curing them another; and it is the fate of reformers, generally, to propose remedies that are worse than the disease. They can see that such and such wheels of the machine have an eccentric motion; but they cannot see that cutting away what they deem superfluous flanges may disturb other wheels that are regulated by that very eccentricity. A change which the reformer thinks will promote simplicity, may happen to produce confusion; and, unless he fully understands the machinery, he is pretty certain to do mischief by meddling with it.

This would seem to be Webster's predicament. He aspired to a Newtonian law that would reconcile all orthographical inconsistencies; he produced certain arbitrary rules of his own creation that reconcile nothing, that are whimsically limited in their scope, and are ridiculous from their reciprocal contradictions.

Webster remarks that "the chief value of a dictionary consists in its definitions." Some one else remarks, that "opinions differ." Yet it must be acknowledged that Webster's remark, as applied to *his own* dictionary, is not far from the truth. The vocabulary of his book has, certainly, the merit of amplitude. He says it "contains sixteen thousand words not to be found in any similar preceding work;" but when one opens the book in the middle, and finds, consecutively,

<i>irremovability,</i>	<i>irremovable,</i>
<i>irremovably,</i>	<i>irremoval,</i>
<i>irremunerable,</i>	<i>irrenowned,</i>
<i>irreparability,</i>	<i>irreparable,</i>
<i>irreparableness,</i>	<i>irreparably,</i>
<i>irrepealability,</i>	<i>irrepealable,</i>
<i>irrepealableness,</i>	<i>irrepealably,</i>
<i>irrepentance,</i>	

he may, perhaps, doubt whether "the value of the dictionary" increases in the direct ratio of its voluminousness. Webster's etymologies, too, are



copious ; probably more so than any preceding lexicographer's, in the proportion of three to one ; but as their genuineness is not always beyond question, their quantity is hardly a fair measure of their "value." The orthography of the dictionary requires a more careful consideration.

The principles—or rather the dogmas—of Webster's proposed reform, are embodied in the following enumerated paragraphs :

1. Considering that the tendency of our language to greater simplicity and broader analogies ought to be watched and cherished with the utmost care, he felt that whenever a movement toward wider analogies and more general rules had advanced so far as to leave but few exceptions to impede its progress, those exceptions ought to be set aside at once, and the analogy rendered complete.

2. We had numerous words derived from the French, originally ending in *re*, as, *cidre*, *chambre*, etc. And, as these had gradually conformed to English spelling, until the number ending in *re* was reduced to fifteen or twenty, with their derivatives, it was necessary to complete the analogy at once by transposing the terminations of the remainder. *Acre*, *massacre*, and *lucre*, however, are necessary exceptions, since transposing their terminations would endanger their pronunciation.

3. We had many hundreds of primitives ending in a single consonant, whose derivatives were formed by the addition of *ing*, *ed*, *er*, etc., and in their derivatives, this single consonant was doubled when the accent fell on it, as, *forget*, *forgetting* ; but it was not doubled when the accent fell on a preceding syllable, as *garden*, *gardener*. There were also about fifty words ending in *l*, in which the analogy was violated, as *travel*, *traveller*. It was necessary, therefore, at once to strike out the superfluous *l* from these fifty words. But the *ll* was retained in *chancellor*, *metallurgy*, *crystalline*, with their cognates, because they were derived directly from the Latin and Greek, *cancellarius*, *metallum*, and *κρύσταλλος*.

4. *Expense*, *recompense*, *license*, which formerly had a *c* in their last syllable, had since taken an *s*, because *s* is used in their derivatives, as, *expensive*, etc. As, in this instance, it was necessary to change only three words to complete the analogy, namely, *defence*, *offence*, and *pretence*, their *c* was at once replaced with an *s*, and they were written *defense*, *offense*, and *pretense*. It had been asked, why not spell *fence* in the same manner? And nothing is easier than the answer ; the derivatives require the *c* ; as, *fencing*, etc., and therefore the *c* of *fence* is retained.

5. *Foretel*, *instil*, *distil*, *fulfil* should be written *foretell*, *instill*, etc., because their derivatives, *foretelling*, *instilling*, etc., are so written.

6. *Dulness, fulness, skilful, wilful*, must be written *dullness, fullness*, etc., because their primitives are so written; as, *dull, full, skill, will*. *Walker* says there is no reason why we should not write *dullness, fullness, skillful*, and *willful*, as well as *stiffness, gruffness, and crossness*.

7. Such compounds as *befall, miscall, install, forestall, inthrall, enroll*, and their derivatives, *befalling, miscalling, installing, forestalling, inthrallment*, and *enrollment*, are spelled with the *ll*, to prevent a false pronunciation.

8. *Mould* and *moult* should be spelled *mold* and *molt*, because the *u* has been dropped, or never was used, in *gold, bold, fold, colt*.

9. *Wo* should be spelled *woe*, because *doe, foe, hoe, toe*, and all similar nouns of one syllable are so spelled. The parts of speech other than nouns, as, *go, so, no*, retain the termination in *o*; as also do nouns of more than one syllable, as, *motto, potato, tomato*.

10. *Practise*, the verb, should be spelled *practice*, because the noun is so spelled. *Drought* should be spelled *drouth*, because it is extensively so pronounced. *Height* should be spelled *hight*, because it was so spelled by *MILTON*. *Ton* should be spelled *tun*, and *molasses melasses*, because that spelling is more consistent with the etymologies. *Contemporary* should be spelled *cotemporary*, because it is more easily pronounced. *Plough* should be spelled *plow*, because that spelling more naturally represents the sound. *Axe* should be spelled *ax*, because *axe* is an improper spelling.

11. Verbs from the Greek  $\iota\omega$ , and others formed in analogy with them, have the termination in *ize*, as, *baptize, legalize*, etc. *Catechise* and *exorcise* are exceptions. Verbs, and some nouns, derived directly from the French, and a few from other sources, have the termination in *ise*, as, *advertise, advise, affranchise, chastise, circumcise, comprise, compromise, criticise, demise, despise, devise, disfranchise, disguise, emprise, enfranchise, enterprise, exercise, merchandise, misprise, premise, reprise, revise, supervise, surmise, surprise*.

These eleven paragraphs, dogmas, rules, or whatever they may be termed, form, with the exception of a few "instances" entirely too trivial to be discussed, the sum total of *Webster's* orthographical creed, presented substantially in his own words.

1. The assumptions of number 1 are characteristic and suggestive. They prophetically weigh and measure the lexicographer. Nobody can doubt what sort of orthography will follow such a preamble. The "tendencies" which it would puzzle any other philologist to discover, the

complacent "*solicitude*" with which those tendencies are "*watched and cherished*," and the heroism which summarily removes impeding "*exceptions*," (regardless of consequences, as reformers always nobly proclaim themselves,) are consistent with each other, and pleasant to look upon.

2. Webster found fifteen or twenty words derived from the French, and retaining their original termination in *re*, "although numerous other words, of similar derivation and termination, had gradually conformed to English spelling;" that is, the *re* had been transposed to *er*, as, *cidre* to *cider*, *chambre* to *chamber*, etc. What Webster means by the term "English spelling," in this connection, is not obvious; *re* is as consistent with any admitted or fixed principle of English orthography as *er*; but the reason why these fifteen or twenty words retained their original termination, and why Webster should have let them alone, is obvious enough to every one but himself; namely, that their *derivatives required it*. As Webster found the words, they stood thus:

<i>theatre,</i>	<i>theatrical,</i>
<i>sepulchre,</i>	<i>sepulchral,</i>
<i>centre,</i>	<i>central,</i>
<i>lustre,</i>	<i>lustrous, etc., etc.</i>

As he left them, they stand thus:

<i>theater,</i>	<i>theatrical,</i>
<i>sepulcher,</i>	<i>sepulchral,</i>
<i>center,</i>	<i>central,</i>
<i>luster,</i>	<i>lustrous, etc., etc.;</i>

that is, he transposed the termination of the primitive, to conform to *his rule*, and then *retransposed* it in the derivative to conform to "English spelling." *His* derivatives should be,

<i>theatrical,</i>
<i>sepulcheral,</i>
<i>central,</i>
<i>lusterous, etc.</i>

*Acre, massacre, lucre*, he says "are necessary exceptions." Doubtless they are "necessary" to *his rule*, and that proves his rule to be a bad one; it neither "promotes simplicity" nor "broadens analogy." When derivatives on the one hand, and pronunciation on the other, oppose the working of an arbitrary rule, a prudent man would withhold his rule; but reformers are seldom prudent men. In direct contradiction of this rule, Webster spells *ogre* with the original termination.

3. For reasons satisfactory to Webster — *ante*, rule number 3 — it was

necessary to strike out the “superfluous *l*” of *travelling*, and “about fifty similar words.” If the precept in rule number 2 has any force, namely, that the spelling must not be altered when altering it endangers the pronunciation, some of these fifty changes will be found hazardous. For instance, as a matter of fact, and by orthoëpical construction,

*shaveling,*  
*starveling, etc.,*

are words of two syllables; yet, under this rule, Webster ordains that

*shovelng,*  
*travelng, etc.,*

which have precisely the same orthoëpical construction, shall be pronounced in three syllables. Here, then, is arbitrary rule the second, in direct conflict with arbitrary rule the first. Which must give way? But that is not all. Webster says that *chancellor*, *metallurgy*, and *crystalline* retain the *ll* because they are derived directly from the Latin and Greek. This “because” may as well be investigated. The lexicographer bases an orthographical principle on his simple assertion of a fact; but that fact is, first, inherently improbable; secondly, is utterly beyond the assertor’s knowledge; and thirdly, would not support his position if it were true. 1. It is improbable. The three words necessarily came to the French before they were adopted by the English; and as *κρῖσταλλος* changed into *crystallinus* on its journey through Rome, they all went “directly” from Italy to France; and our English ancestors had no occasion to go to Italy for what was already to be had by crossing the Channel. Moreover, the *h* of *chancellor* proves that it came “directly” from the French, and Webster *dis*-proves his own assertion of its derivation from *cancellarius*, by giving, in his own dictionary, *chancelier* as its etymology! 2. It is beyond the assertor’s knowledge. Neither he nor his great-grandfather was *there* when the word was adopted; no human being can affirm, as truth, what is so remote and conjectural; and a vague and rash *guess* forms no apology, even, for such an affirmation. 3. If the words were “directly so derived,” the fact would not justify Webster’s excepting them from his rule. That rule is, inferentially — otherwise, it has no meaning whatever — that words “directly derived” always retain the *ll* of their originals. Yet observe how Webster himself sets this rule at nought in this very dictionary:

<i>excel</i> ,	spelled with one <i>l</i> ,	is derived from	<i>excello</i> ;
<i>dispel</i> ,	“	“	<i>dispello</i> ;
<i>repel</i> ,	“	“	<i>repello</i> ;

*libel*, spelled with one *l*, is derived from *libellus* ;  
*pupil*, “ “ “ *pupillus* ;  
*compel*, “ “ “ *compello* ;

and so forth, and so forth. Nor is this all. After Webster has expunged the “superfluous *l*” from his “fifty words,” *marvellous*, *counsellor*, etc., in obedience to rule number 3, he proceeds, in defiance of the same rule, to spell in his dictionary as follows :

<i>gravel</i> ,	(primitive,)	<i>lamel</i> ,	(primitive,)
<i>gravelly</i> ,		<i>lamellar</i> ,	
<i>chapel</i> ,	(primitive,)	<i>lamellarly</i> ,	
<i>chapellany</i> ,		<i>lamellate</i> ,	
<i>cancel</i> ,	(primitive,)	<i>lamellated</i> ,	
<i>cancellate</i> ,		<i>lamelliferous</i> ,	
<i>cancellated</i> ,		<i>etc., etc.</i> ,	
<i>cancellation</i> ,			

and so on, indefinitely. There is another point to be considered, about rule number 3. Its phraseology seems to be plain, but Webster’s practice confuses it. The rule *says*, that when the accent falls on the final consonant of the primitive, it is to be doubled in the derivative, and not otherwise ; as, *forget*, *forgetting*, in the one case, and *travel*, *traveler*, in the other. Yet Webster spells

*tranquil*, *tranquillity*, etc.,

as if he were prepared to say, that, though the accent does not fall on the final consonant of the primitive while it remains a primitive, yet if that consonant takes the accent when the word becomes a derivative, it is still to be doubled. This would be interpreting Webster’s rule with a large latitude in his favor, and it is an interpretation to which he is by no means entitled. Nevertheless, give him the full benefit of it, and then apply the rule, so construed, to his spelling of

<i>civil</i> ,	<i>civility</i> ,
<i>legal</i> ,	<i>legality</i> ,
<i>frugal</i> ,	<i>frugality</i> , etc.,

and, then, for a counter-contradiction of his rule, where the final consonant of the primitive *is* accented, and the same consonant in the derivative is *not*, take his spelling of

*excel*, *excellent*,

and the lexicographer’s inconsistency approaches the sublime ! It is to be observed that the spelling of the twenty and odd words here cited is correct in fact, but is not correct according to Webster’s own rules.

4. Webster specifies *license*, among other words, as having been changed from *licence*, "because the derivatives require the *s*." This affirmation is an extraordinary "license" for a lexicographer whose dictionary contains the following words:

<i>license,</i>	<i>licentiate,</i>
<i>licensed,</i>	<i>licentiation,</i>
<i>licensing,</i>	<i>licentious,</i>
<i>licenser,</i>	<i>licentiously,</i>
<i>licensure,</i>	<i>licentiousness;</i>

that is, four derivatives in which the *s* is used, and five where it is not. And this misstatement of the fact is material, because Webster makes it one of his points of justification in "changing the only three words that remain, terminating in *ence*." But what does Webster mean by saying that *pretence*, *offence*, and *defence*, are "the only three words that remain terminating in *ence*"? His own dictionary contains many other words "terminating in *ence*," the derivatives of which do not retain the *c*, all of which he leaves just as he finds them, in a state of absolute non-conformity to his rule. For example:

<i>sentence,</i>	<i>sententious,</i>
<i>consequence,</i>	<i>consequential,</i>
<i>inference,</i>	<i>inferential,</i>

and so on. If a direct answer could have been extorted from Webster, it would be pleasant to see his reply to this question: Since it was necessary to change *defence* into *defense*, because *defensive* is spelled with an *s*, why should *sentence* remain unchanged, when its derivatives are spelled with a *t*? Webster says, "The question has been asked, Why not spell *fence* with an *s*?" And he finds "nothing easier than the reply, that the derivatives of *fence* require the *c*." If this reply means any thing, it means that the spelling of a derivative must control the spelling of its primitive; and if this rule has any force, it must be general in its application, and not restricted to such isolated cases as Webster's caprice may dictate. The reader will have occasion to keep this point in remembrance. Now, *what are* "the primitives," in the case of *fence*, *offence*, and *defence*? Webster's dictionary gives the answer:

*fend*, the root of *offend* and *defend*;  
*fence*, for etymology, see *fend*;

in other words, *fend* is the original word; and from it, in order, come *fence*, *offend*, *defend*, *offence*, *offensive*, etc., *defence*, *defensive*, etc. So that, when Webster changed *defence* to *defense*, instead of conforming to

his rule, that the spelling of the derivative must govern that of the primitive, he, in fact, and without knowing it, practically enacted a new rule, that the spelling of one derivative must govern the spelling of another derivative, whenever the lexicographer deemed it expedient. The remaining word of the "only three that remained," is *pretence*. Here, again, by parity of reasoning, the actual primitive is *pretend*; but, for the sake of the argument, let *pretence* be the primitive, and then consult Webster's dictionary:

*pretense,*  
*pretensed, (Encyc.)*  
*pretension;*

the primitive, *pretence*, is changed, to conform to its two derivatives. But what sort of a modern English word is *pretensed*? Webster cites the Encyclopædia as authority. *What Encyclopædia?* Rule out the word, for the present, as not sufficiently accredited, and there remains one primitive *vs.* one derivative; a tie vote. But this is not a fair statement on the part of Webster; he omits the familiar word *pretentious*. His dictionary, which "contains 16,000 more words than can be found in any previous dictionary," and which attains that distinction by recruits from all creditable and discreditable sources, nevertheless does not contain the word *pretentious*. Why? Did Webster omit that, and insert *pretensed*, in order to give "the derivatives" a uniformity of spelling, and a majority of numbers? If so, the proceeding smacks strongly of *false* "pretences."

5, 6. Under rule number 3, Webster hunts down the "superfluous *l*" with the spirit of an exterminator; and in his preface, he still further hardens himself against *l*, by quoting a sneer from *Walker*; but Webster, under rule number 3, and Webster under rules 5 and 6, are two different men. The reasons given for adding an *l* to some words are quite as good as the reasons for taking it away from others; of which, more anon. In the mean time, it is impossible not to suggest, in reference to the quotation from *Walker*, (*vide* rule number 6,) that as *dulness* should be written *dullness*, because its primitive is written *dull*, *skilful* should be written *skillfull*, to "complete the analogy" with *stiffness*. An illustration, however, is a dangerous form of argument; it is very apt to prove too much, and those who resort to it in one case must submit to it in another. Apply this to rule number 5. "*Distil*, etc., should be written *distill*, because the derivatives, *distiller*, etc., require the *ll*;" then, certainly, *forget*, *submit*, *begin*, *refer*, *concur*, *repel*, and so

on, should be written *forgett*, *submitt*, *beginn*, *referr*, *concurr*, *repell*, and so on, because their derivatives require the final consonant to be doubled; as, *forgetting*, *submitting*, *beginning*, *referring*, *concurring*, *repelling*. By the way, Webster's views of the powers of a lexicographer are pleasantly illustrated in a remark about Walker. Having quoted, in his preface, Walker's opinion on "the superfluous *l*," he says, "These were the deliberate opinions of Walker. If he had taken the trouble to carry them into his vocabulary, instead of relying on this mere remark for the correction of the error, probably, by this time, the error *would have been wholly eradicated from our orthography.*"

7. Webster's manner of stating this rule leads the reader to suppose that *befall*, *install*, *forestall*, *inthrall*, *miscall*, and *enroll*, are Webster's improvements on the previous spelling; but the last two, only, are his; and it is very odd that, when he became alive to the danger of mispronouncing *enrol* with one *l*, he should be so insensible to the same danger in *control*, as to spell it with a single *l*; and that, too, while he spells the derivatives *controlling*, etc., with the double *l*, in direct opposition to his own rule number 5.

8. "*Mould* and *moult* should be written *mold* and *molt*, because the *u* has been dropped, or never was used, in *gold*, *bold*, *fold*, and *colt*." The reason is good, and its force may be shown, as in rule number 5, by carrying out the illustration; *court* should be written *cort*, "because the *u* has been dropped, or never was used in" *port* and *fort*!

9. Webster found *wo*, *go*, *so*, *no*, without the *e*, and *foe*, *toe*, *hoe*, with it. His reason for adding the *e* to *wo*, and for not adding it to *go*, *so*, *no*, is, that *wo* is a noun, and the other three words are "other parts of speech." This is a small matter, at best; but Webster's reason is entirely arbitrary.

10. Waiving the questions whether MILTON is an authority for English orthography in the nineteenth century, and if he is so, whether *hight* is not misprinted from his manuscript *per alium*, one question remains touching rule number 10, viz.: Is there any disputed point in ethics, morals, religion, astronomy, or nursery rhymes, which may not be effectually disposed of by this universal solvent "*because*"? A word, however, as to MILTON, on the questions waived. Webster cites a poet who died a century and a half before the "American Dictionary" was born, in support of the spelling of the single word *hight*. But, surely, MILTON, if an authority at all, cannot be restricted to one word; he must be presumed to have had a knowledge of orthography generally, if he is per-



mitted to dogmatize on it particularly; and if Webster accredits him as a standard, he must follow him as a standard. Turn, then, to the first edition of *Paradise Lost*. That may pretty safely be taken as an exponent of the poet's principles of English spelling — if, in his blindness, he had any. This edition, published in London in 1669, has, *passim*, the following specimens:

*Som (some), rowled (rolled), shon (shone), tast (taste), fowl (foul), thir (their), justifie, defie, adversarie, progenie, alwaies, skie, appeer, neer, cleer, binde, mankinde, wilde, waye, ruine, cherube, haire, paine, forme, eare, gulfe, rime, accoste, meeter, mee, hee, seaventh, warr, clann, kenn, farr, lyes, onely, desperat, supream, sollid, etc.*

11. Webster does not say *why* “verbs from the Greek  $\iota\omega$  terminate in *ize*, as *baptize*,” etc., nor why “catechise and exorcise are exceptions.” But the working of his rule, under which he changes *defence* to *defense*, because *defensive* requires the *s*, seems to be impeded when applied to *baptize*, for he leaves it as he finds it, although he is compelled to spell its derivatives with an *s*; *baptist, baptism, baptismal*, etc. The assertion that *baptize* and *legalize* are “derived directly from the Greek,” needs confirmation. Webster proceeds to say that “verbs and some nouns, derived from the French and elsewhere, have the termination in *ise*,” and he furnishes a list of examples that professes to include the whole. The necessity for the remark and the citations is not very obvious; but it is strange that with his propensity to “complete analogies,” he should have omitted to include, in his list the single and “only remaining” word *prize*; certainly, on his own showing, that should be spelled *prise*.

It would seem, then, that Webster's much vaunted reform is limited to about *eighty words* in a dictionary containing *eighty thousand* words; being the proportion of one to a thousand. A homœopathic quantity; yet, as the words victimized are those in common use, the minute dose has had a visible effect on the system. But the effect is not remedial. The patient is no better. English orthography has not been simplified, nor have its analogies been broadened by Webster's labors, even supposing his innovations had been accepted by scholars — which they have not. The dictionary may *sell*, but not for its orthography. The proprietors of a large publishing house, who are also publishers of the dictionary, have introduced Webster's spelling into their books, probably as a matter of contract; and some newspapers have, to a greater or less extent, taken the same course. But these instances carry no authority on a purely

literary question. Educated men and good writers, generally, have repudiated the experiment. And why should they not? The volunteer reformer was every way unequal to his task. He has given no good reason for any one change; and his changes, so far as adopted, have introduced confusion. His rules are ridiculous in themselves, irreconcilable with each other, and constantly at variance with his own practice. He changes a termination, or adds or takes away a letter, because the primitive requires it — because the derivative requires it — because it endangers the pronunciation, when it does not — because it secures the pronunciation, when it does not — because the word is a noun — because it isn't a noun — because it is an exception — because it is so pronounced (by ignorant people) — because MILTON spelled it so — in short, "because" *any thing* that fits the caprice of the moment. Such advancing and retreating, such convolutions and involutions of reasoning, all for the sake of doing what never was done before, and all within the compass of eighty words, can find no precedent in the career of reforms.

And it is remarkable, that Webster, with all his plodding, could not hit upon the really weak points of the language. He had the luck always to attack what was impregnable — at least, to *his* assaults. There is no lack of inconsistencies in English orthography; but the instances that are least defensible are just those that Webster failed to discover. It may be well to designate a few specimens — not with the intention of urging a reform; Webster's experience in that line may well deter imitators; but — to show how obscure are obvious truths to a certain class of investigators.

To *lead*, to *read*; the preterite and past participle of these verbs are pronounced *led* and *red*, and yet are spelled *led* and *read*.

*Use*, *abuse*, *rise*; the nouns and verbs have a uniform spelling, but the nouns are pronounced as *uce* and *ice*, and the verbs *uze* and *ize*; yet *advice* and *advise*, with a similar difference of pronunciation, are spelled to conform to that difference. Again, *surprise*, *surmise*, etc., pronounce the *s* like *z*, in both the verb and the noun.

*Few* and *view*; why should not the spelling of these words be uniform?

*Whole* in the adverb drops the *e*, and becomes *wholly*; *vile* in the adverb retains the *e*, *vilely*.

*Fascinate* and *vacillate*; one with the *s* and the other without it; *imitate* and *imminent*; one with one *m*, and the other with two. These words follow their respective etymologies, but there are so many instances where etymology does not control orthography, it seems rather *Websterian* to give that as a reason for the difference.

*Vermilion, pavilion, cotillion*; all directly from the French, and all having the *ll* in the original, though only the last retains it.

*Boot, root, foot*, in the singular, change, in the plural, to *boots, roots, feet*.

*Proffer* and *profit*, with a similar etymology, are thus differently spelled.

*Couple* and *supple*, from the French *couple* and *souple*; etymology in all respects identical, and yet, though pronounced alike in English, are thus diversely spelled.

*Episode* and *epitome* have the same etymology, yet one has three syllables, and the other four; this, however, is not a matter of spelling, but of pronunciation.

These are a few examples of *real* inconsistency in English orthography; but probably no man in his senses would undertake to reform them; the game would not pay for the candle.

Webster's tampering with the language was a calamity, because *no* radicalism is without its followers, and he has his. But the thing will have its day, and this good may come of it—other enthusiasts, taking warning from his example, may learn that a reformer whose entire theory is based on assumptions, whose rules are bare assertions of his opinions, and whose practice is inconsistent with both, will never make much progress among educated minds.

# Worcester's New Dictionary

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A

PRONOUNCING, EXPLANATORY AND SYNONYMOUS

## DICTIONARY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

WITH

- I.—PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK AND LATIN PROPER NAMES.
- II.—PRONUNCIATION OF SCRIPTURE PROPER NAMES.
- III.—COMMON CHRISTIAN NAMES, WITH THEIR SIGNIFICATION.
- IV.—PRONUNCIATION OF MODERN GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.
- V.—ABBREVIATIONS USED IN WRITING AND PRINTING.
- VI.—PHRASES AND QUOTATIONS IN LATIN, FRENCH, ITALIAN, AND SPANISH.
- VII.—THE PRINCIPAL DEITIES AND HEROES IN GREEK AND ROMAN FABULOUS HISTORY.

BY JOSEPH E. WORCESTER, LL. D.

OCTAVO. 565 PAGES.

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THIS Dictionary, designed for the use of Colleges, Academies, High Schools, and Private Libraries, bears on every page indubitable marks of having been carefully and skilfully prepared by Dr. Worcester, whose previous contributions to our educational literature have been models of condensation, of lucid arrangement, and of concise and perspicuous language, in their mode of presenting the results of extensive and accurate research.

In the department of DEFINITIONS, he has not contented himself with merely giving the accepted significations of a word, but has

shown in what connections or relations it is appropriately replaced by nearly equivalent words. This is what is meant by the term *synonymous* in the title. It adds greatly to copiousness and variety in speech and writing to be able to substitute one word for another without an essential alteration of the idea to be expressed. But it is very difficult to discriminate with accuracy between several expressions nearly related, and to select that which shall be most appropriate in a given case. Very few, even of the best speakers and writers, become so thoroughly masters of their native language as never to experience embarrassment in the search after a fit expression. It is to help in overcoming this difficulty that Dr. Worcester has introduced, in connection with those words which seem most to require it, a short exhibition of the synonymous terms, showing at a glance the distinctions to be noticed in choosing among them. Take, for example, the following words:—

**Ā-BĀN'DŌN, v. a.** To give up; to quit; to forsake; to desert; to leave; to relinquish; to resign; to renounce; to abdicate; to surrender; to forego.

*Syn.*—Bad parents *abandon* their children; men *abandon* the unfortunate objects of their guilty passions; men are *abandoned* by their friends; they *abandon* themselves to unlawful pleasures.—A mariner *abandons* his vessel and cargo in a storm; we *abandon* our houses and property to an invading army; we *desert* a post or station; *leave* the country; *forsake* companions; *relinquish* claims; *quit* business; *resign* an office; *renounce* a profession, or the world; *abdicate* a throne; *surrender* a town; *surrender* what we have in trust; we *abandon* a measure or an enterprise; *forego* a claim or a pleasure.

**Ā-D-VĪCE', n.** Counsel; instruction:—intelligence.

*Syn.*—A physician gives *advice*; a parent, *counsel*; a teacher, *instruction*:—*advice, intelligence, or information* may be received from a correspondent.

**Ā-MĀZE', v. a.** To astonish; perplex; confound.

*Syn.*—*Amazed* at what is frightful or incomprehensible; *astonished* at what is striking; *perplexed, confounded, or confused* at what is embarrassing; *surprised* at what is unexpected.

**Ā-MĀS'SĀ-DŌR, n.** A foreign minister of the highest rank sent on public business from one sovereign power to another.

*Syn.*—An *ambassador* and *plenipotentiary* imply the highest representative rank. An *ambassador* and *resident*, or *minister resident*, are permanent functionaries. An *envoy* and *resident* are functionaries of the second class of foreign ministers; and a *chargé d'affaires* is one of the third or lowest class.

**Ā-NĀL'Y-SĪS, n.; pl. Ā-NĀL'Y-SĒŠ.** The resolution of any thing into its first elements or component parts;—opposed to *synthesis*, which is the union of the component parts to form a compound. *Synthesis* is synonymous with *composition*; *analysis*, with *decomposition*.

**Ā-SŌ-CĪ-Ā'TĪŌN, (ās-sō-shē-ā'shun) n.** Confederacy; partnership; connection; union.

*Syn.*—An ecclesiastical or scientific *association*; a *confederacy* of states; a *partnership* in trade; a *connection* between persons; a *combination* of individuals; a *union* of parties or of states.

**ĀV-Ā-RĪ'CIŪS, (āv-ā-rīsh'ūs) a.** Possessed of avarice; greedy of gain; covetous; niggardly; miserly; parsimonious; penurious.

*Syn.*—The *avaricious* are unwilling to part with their money; the *covetous* are eager to obtain money; the *niggardly* are mean in their dealings with others; the *miserly, parsimonious, and penurious* are mean to themselves, as well as to others.

**ĀS'TŌM, n.** The frequent repetition of the same act; habit; habitual practice; usage:—patronage:—*duties* on exports and imports. See **TAXES**.

*Syn.*—*Custom* is a frequent repetition of the same act; *habit* is the effect of such repetition; *fashion* is the custom of numbers; *usage*, the habit of numbers.

**ĀS-CĪV'ĒR, n.** One who deceives; a cheat.

*Syn.*—A *deceiver* or *cheat* imposes on individuals; an *impostor*, on the public.

**DE-FEND'**, *v. a.* To protect; to vindicate; to repel.

*Syn.*—*Defend* the innocent; *protect* the weak; *vindicate* those who are unjustly accused; *repel* aggression.

**DIS-CERN'MENT**, (diz-zern'ment) *n.* Act of discerning; penetration; sagacity; judgment.

*Syn.*—*Discernment* to distinguish; *penetration* or *sagacity* to perceive; *discrimination* to mark differences; *judgment* to decide.

**HIS'TO-RY**, *n.* A narrative of past events; a relation of facts respecting nations, empires, &c. — *Civil* or *political history* is the history of states and empires. *Profane history* is another term for *civil history*, as distinguished from *sacred history*, which is the historical part of the Scriptures. *Ecclesiastical history* is the history of the Christian church. *Natural history* is the history of all the productions of nature, animal, vegetable, and mineral.

*Syn.*—*Annals* are historical events digested in a series according to years; a *chronicle* is a register of events in the order of time; *memoirs*, an account of events or transactions written familiarly, or as they are remembered by the narrator.

**IN-FI-DÉL**, *n.* A disbeliever of Christianity; an atheist; an unbeliever.

*Syn.*—An *infidel* is one who has no belief in divine revelation; *unbeliever* and *disbeliever* are terms commonly, but not always, used in the same sense:—a *sceptic* professes to doubt of all things:—a *deist* believes in the existence of God, but disbelieves revelation:—an *atheist* denies the existence of God:—*freethinker* is commonly used in an ill sense, as synonymous with *infidel*.

**LÂN'GUAGE** (lång'gwaj), *n.* The mode of utterance; human speech; the speech of one nation; tongue; dialect; idiom; style.

*Syn.*—*Language* is a very general term, as we say the *language* not only of men, but of beasts and birds. *Tongue* refers to an original language, as the Hebrew *tongue*. *Speech* contemplates language as broken or cut into words, as the parts of *speech*, the gift of *speech*. Every language has its peculiar *idioms*. A *dialect* is an incidental form of a language used by the inhabitants of a particular district. The Greek *language*; Greek *idiom*; Attic *dialect*. Native or vernacular *language*; mother *tongue*. Elegant or good *language* or *style*.

**LAW'YER**, *n.* One versed in law; an attorney.

*Syn.*—*Lawyer* is a general term for one who is versed in, or who practises law. — *Barrister*, *counsellor*, and *counsel*, are terms applied to lawyers who advise and assist clients, and plead for them in a court of justice. — An *attorney* is a lawyer who acts for another, and prepares cases for trial. — An *advocate* is a lawyer who argues causes. — A *special pleader* is one who prepares the written pleadings in a cause. — A *chamber counsellor* is a lawyer who gives advice in his office, but does not act in court. — A *conveyancer* is one who draws writings, by which real estate is transferred. — *Civilian* and *jurist* are terms applied to such as are versed in the science of law, particularly civil or Roman law. — A *solicitor* is a lawyer employed in a chancery court. — A *publicist* is a writer on the laws of nature and nations.

These instances will suffice to give an idea of the very great benefit one may receive by having this Dictionary at hand while engaged in composition; and to young pupils in our schools who are making their first attempts at expressing their thoughts in writing, such a book must be invaluable. At the same time it will not be less useful as a guide in all other matters upon which dictionaries are usually consulted. The definitions, though concisely expressed, are accurate, and sufficiently full to satisfy all ordinary inquiries. In SPELLING, the most approved usage is followed, without any attempt at innovation, and the various modes of PRONUNCIATION are given, with their several authorities, the author's preference being only intimated, but not insisted on.

In the APPENDIX we find, the Vocabularies of Classical, Scripture, and Modern Geographical Names, which were contained in the Comprehensive Dictionary, here much enlarged, and, in addition, a

## WORCESTER'S NEW DICTIONARY.

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list of common Christian names of men and women, with their etymologies and signification, in the perusal of which one may find much instruction and amusement.

Numerous letters have been received by the publishers, and others by the author (to which the publishers have had access), from some of the most distinguished teachers and literary men in different parts of the country. The following extracts will show in what estimation the work is held by them.

From the Hon. Edward Everett, LL. D.

BOSTON, MASS., November 19, 1855.

I willingly comply with your request that I would express my opinion of the Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary, by Mr. Worcester, of which you were good enough to send me a copy a few weeks since. As far as I have had occasion to examine it, I find this new Dictionary to be marked with the characteristics of Mr. Worcester's former works of the same class, viz., accuracy as to matters of undisputed fact, and sound judgment as to debatable points. His orthography and pronunciation represent, as far as I am aware, the most approved usage of our language. His definitions seldom leave any thing to desire. The synonymes form a valuable feature of the present work, and a novel one for a manual dictionary. The matter contained in the Appendix is of great value, and will materially promote the convenience of the reader.

I have made constant use of Mr. Worcester's Dictionaries since their first publication, and I consider the present work, in some respects, an improvement on its predecessors.

EDWARD EVERETT.

From William H. Prescott, LL. D.

BOSTON, MASS., November 8, 1855.

I am much obliged to you for the present of your excellent Dictionary. It is a welcome addition to my library; for, though I had provided myself with an earlier edition, I was not possessed of this, which evidently contains many improvements on its predecessors. I have long since learned to appreciate your valuable labors, which have done so much to establish the accuracy of pronunciation, while affording the reader, by the citation of authorities, the means of determining for himself. Nor is the public less indebted to you for the pains you have bestowed on settling the orthography of words, which in many instances affords ample debatable ground to the inquirer. These more prominent merits of all your dictionaries are enhanced by the judicious selection of synonymes, with which the present edition is enriched.

A work compiled on so sound and philosophical principles, and yet so well accommodated to popular use, cannot fail to commend itself to all who would have a correct knowledge of their vernacular.

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

WORCESTER'S NEW DICTIONARY.

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From Washington Irving, LL. D.

SUNNY SIDE, N. Y., October 3, 1855.

Accept my thanks for the copy of your Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary which you have had the kindness to send me. As far as I have had time to examine it, it gives me great satisfaction, and appears to me to be well calculated to fulfil the purpose for which it professes to be intended — to supply the wants of common schools, and to be a sufficient manual for schools of a higher order.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

From the Hon. Josiah Quincy, LL. D., late President of Harvard University

QUINCY, MASS., October 9, 1855.

As I once, I think, told you, that agreeing with Lord Bolingbroke in little else, I shared his admiration and gratitude for *writers of dictionaries*, — he thought them worthy of special thanks to Heaven, — works so full of labor, so extensive in their objects of research, yet so minute in the subjects of attention; so useful as to have become a *necessity* to literary life, yet requiring for success so many particulars, various in their kinds, so much general knowledge, so much accuracy of thought, combined with judgment in investigation, that it seems that nature must be more than usually beneficent to confer on any one man all the qualities requisite to a happy result in the undertaking. The public have long since passed judgment on your qualifications, and the lapse of many years has confirmed its earliest decisions.

JOSIAH QUINCY.

From Francis Bowen, A. M., Alford Professor of Moral Philosophy in Harvard College, and late Editor of the North American Review.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., October 4, 1855.

I am much obliged to you for the copy of your new Dictionary, which I have examined with some care. It seems well adapted to answer its purpose as an academic text-book, being of convenient size, and distinctly printed on good paper, so that it can be freely consulted without injury to the eyes. The vocabulary is full enough, and the character of the predecessors of the book is a sufficient voucher for its accuracy. The synonymes are a valuable addition to the plan of the work, and so far as I have examined them they appear to be concisely and clearly expressed. I have no doubt that it will have the ample success which has attended all your previous publications on lexicography.

FRANCIS BOWEN.

From the Rev. Edward Hitchcock, D. D., late President of Amherst College.

AMHERST, MASS., October 3, 1855.

I acknowledge with gratitude the receipt of your new Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary. Having been in the habit of using the "Universal and Critical Dictionary" almost exclusively for several years, I shall welcome the new one with its improvements and additions. So far as I have examined it, it seems to me admirably adapted to the sphere it was intended to occupy. I trust the public will appreciate its value, and thus reward you in some measure for your indefatigable and long-continued labors in this department of learning.

EDWARD HITCHCOCK.



WORCESTER'S NEW DICTIONARY.

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From the Hon. John McLean, LL. D., Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, October 21, 1855.

I thank you for a copy of your "Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary of the English Language." Ever since the publication of your large Dictionary I have had it near me in my library, and one of the smaller editions I have always had on my table, at every place where my public duties call me.

I have often felt desirous that you should publish a more copious edition than the smaller volume of the work, without increasing its size so as to render it unportable. Your late publication is all that can be desired in this respect: and it contains much valuable information on orthography, and the pronunciation of words, which is not found in any other dictionary.

JOHN MCLEAN.

From the Rev. Eliphalet Nott, D. D., Pres. of Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

UNION COLLEGE, N. Y., 2 October, 1855.

The very acceptable present of a copy of "Worcester's Academic Dictionary" has come to hand. With the larger work I have long been familiar, and can cheerfully bear testimony to its great merit. It is at once a monument to the honor of its author and to the country thus signalized by his labors. From a glance at the contents of this volume I doubt not it will add alike to the literary wealth of the community and to the reputation of the author.

Trusting that this production, the result of so much patient toil and extensive research, will receive from the public the reward it so richly deserves, I am, very respectfully, yours,

ELIPH'T NOTT.

From C. C. Felton, LL. D., Eliot Professor of Greek Literature in Harvard College.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., October 1, 1855.

I am greatly obliged to you for the copy of your Dictionary which you sent to me. I shall keep it on my table for constant reference, and I know very well it will be extremely useful to me. It gives me great pleasure to see the general and hearty recognition of the value of your labors in this important department of literature. The influence of your works is rapidly extending, in spite of opposition; and I am very sure that your great Dictionary will become the standard everywhere.

C. C. FELTON.

From the Rev. William A. Stearns, D. D., President of Amherst College.

AMHERST COLLEGE, MASS., October 2, 1855.

I have already looked into it [the Dictionary] sufficiently to see that it is a great improvement on your former work, which to say of any work of the kind is the greatest praise. I am sure it will be hailed with gladness by the best scholars in the country. Henceforth, for years to come, if my life should be spared, the copy you have kindly forwarded to me will have a place within the reach of my study table, and be numbered among my daily companions.

WILLIAM A. STEARNS.

WORCESTER'S NEW DICTIONARY.

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From the Rev. Charles G. Finney, President of Oberlin College.

OBERLIN, OHIO, October 6, 1855.

I have examined your Dictionary in respect to those things in which all others are, in my estimation, deficient, and am of opinion that, for the English reader, this work will meet the wants of the American people far better than any thing hitherto published. Within the last quarter of a century many foreign words have come into common use, especially in our periodical literature, the signification of which few English readers understand. The advance of science in all its departments is also bringing before the common reader many terms and phrases not generally understood. Our youth resort in vain to the English or American Dictionaries for the definition of those words and phrases. Our language is constantly receiving additions from almost every language of Europe. Besides many foreign terms and phrases not understood in this country because of their origin, many obsolete terms are coming again into use. We hardly take up a newspaper, and seldom a quarterly, without finding something to puzzle the English reader, no explanation of which is found in our standard Dictionaries. This want has pressed more heavily upon the reading public from year to year. I have looked over the pages of your work, and have been pleased to find nearly every thing of the kind I refer to that could be desired. It is a timely and highly important book. It is needed in nearly every family, and will be much valued by the reader. That it may have the circulation it deserves is my earnest wish.

CHARLES G. FINNEY.

From the Rev. James Walker, D. D., President of Harvard College.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., October 5, 1855.

I have looked your Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary over with some care, and think the additions and improvements you have introduced into it, compared with any of your former Dictionaries, are important, especially as regards synonymes. It is beyond question the most convenient Dictionary for the study-table, and for common use, which I have yet seen.

JAMES WALKER.

From the Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, LL. D., President of Rutgers College.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J., October 6, 1855.

I heartily thank you for your excellent "Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary." I shall prize it as a most valuable help in all its departments — and especially in the last. It was a happy thought to interweave the synonymous explanations; they so much and readily aid hard-working men, who have so little time for research, as those who have many executive duties in seminaries and colleges.

THEO. FRELINGHUYSEN.

From the Rev. Daniel Kirkwood, LL. D., President of Delaware College.

DELAWARE COLLEGE, October 3, 1855.

I have just received the copy of your "Dictionary of the English Language," which you had the goodness to forward me. I regard the work as one of great merit, admirably adapted to the uses for which it is designed.

DANIEL KIRKWOOD.

WORCESTER'S NEW DICTIONARY.

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From the Rev. James B. Dodd, President of Transylvania University.

LEXINGTON, KY., October 6, 1855.

It would exceed the limits which must be prescribed to this communication to enter particularly into the merits of this Dictionary, and I must be content with the general testimonial that, for the purposes of convenient consultation by readers of every class, and more especially by the *student* who would gain a *critical*, a *practical*; and an *extensive* acquaintance with the English and American language undefiled, there is no Dictionary equal to this.

I have no other motive for commending this work than such as may be supposed to spring from a zeal which has grown out of long service in the cause of education, and a desire to see some honor done to the veteran author of the work, who, from the "accursed love of gold," has been sought to be made the victim of literary injustice and fraud in this country and in England.

JAMES B. DODD.

From the Rev. Benjamin Hale, D. D., President of Hobart Free College, Geneva, N. Y.

GENEVA, N. Y., October 11, 1855.

I have used your larger Dictionary many years with great satisfaction, and your smaller one I have been in the habit of recommending for the use of pupils. I am much pleased with the edition I have just received. The addition of the synonymes is valuable, and, so far as I have examined, seems to be very aptly done, and the whole work to be very complete for its purpose.

BENJAMIN HALE.

From the Rev. C. Collins, D. D., President of Dickinson College.

CARLISLE, PA., October 5, 1855.

I have to acknowledge the receipt from you of a copy of your "Pronouncing, Explanatory, and Synonymous Dictionary of the English Language." After giving it a somewhat careful examination, I take pleasure in saying that it seems to me to fulfil the conditions of a common reference Dictionary more perfectly than any one now before the public. I shall recommend to the college bookseller to order it for the use of the students.

C. COLLINS.

From the Rev. Wm. A. Smith, D. D., President of Randolph Macon College, Va.

RANDOLPH MACON COLLEGE, VA., October 18, 1855.

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your small Dictionary. I embraced an early opportunity to examine it, and am happy to state that your additions to the plan usually pursued in works of the kind are decided improvements, greatly increasing the practical value of a Dictionary.

WM. A. SMITH.

From S. H. Taylor, LL. D., Principal of Phillips' Academy, Andover, Mass.

ANDOVER, MASS., October 5, 1855.

It seems to me to combine unusual excellences, and as a manual for general use, and for high schools and colleges, it has no superior. The attention given to the principal synonymes of the language is a new and valuable feature. I am confident that the Dictionary will meet the high expectations of the public.

S. H. TAYLOR.

# Worcester's Series of Dictionaries

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WORCESTER'S DICTIONARIES are used in the Public Schools of the cities of Boston, New York, Baltimore, Washington, D. C., New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Schenectady, and in many other of the principal cities and towns in the United States. The unprincipled attacks made by selfish and interested parties upon the character of Dr. Worcester and his Dictionaries have only attracted the attention of the public to the merits of his works; and the sale of them is rapidly increasing in every part of the country.

Dr. Worcester has done more to establish the accuracy of pronunciation than any other English Lexicographer. In all disputable cases, he has not been content with expressing his own preference, but by the citation of the most distinguished authorities, he has left the student the means of determining for himself.

Every practical teacher knows that one of the principal uses of a Dictionary in a school room is to determine the proper pronunciation of words. Most of the dictionaries used are defective in this particular. Take, for instance, the following classes of words in Webster's Dictionary: *bait, bear; date, dare; fate, fare; hate, hare; late, lair; mate, mare; pate, pare; rate, rare; wait, ware, &c.* In all these words Webster improperly gives but one sound of *a*, viz., the long sound as heard in *fate*. The absurdity of this, as well as the impossibility of following his directions, may readily be seen by pronouncing the foregoing class of words in rapid succession. Webster makes no distinction between the sounds of *e* in *merit* and *mercy; merry* and *merchant*; and of *u* in *hurry* and *hurdle*. His errors, which extend in similar classes of words throughout all his dictionaries, arise from his imperfect knowledge of the power of the letter *r*. A moment's reflection will show that this letter has a peculiar influence on both the long and the short sound of the vowel which precedes it, in a monosyllable, or in an accented syllable, unless the succeeding syllable begins with a vowel sound; as, *care, fare, pare, mercy, merchant, hurdle, &c.* When the succeeding syllable begins with a vowel sound, the sound of the preceding vowel is not modified; as, *merit, merry, hurry, &c.*

Dr. Worcester has wisely made a distinction in marking the sounds of these classes of words; and for this and other excellences, his works are commended by the best scholars in the country.

Teachers have only to examine his Dictionaries, and they will be sure to recommend the use of them.

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